

College of Public Health News

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Georgia Southern University

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Alumnus Appointed to State Public Health Office

February 18, 2014



Dr. Chris Rustin

Chris Rustin, Dr.P.H., a recent graduate of the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) doctoral program, has been appointed the director of Environmental Health for the Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH).

Rustin's new role will officially begin on May 1, but during this transition period he will work closely with the current director who is retiring. Drs. Simone Charles, John Luque and Robert Vogel guided his dissertation work, titled "Evaluating the efficacy of a childhood lead poisoning risk model as an accurate predictor of lead exposure," and it will be critical to implementation of future environmental health and wellness policies for Georgia. Rustin will oversee approximately 12 environmental health programs, and a staff of more than 400 environmental health professionals at the state, district and county boards of health level.

"This is a well-deserved appointment for Chris," said Dr. Simone Charles, dissertation chair and associate professor in the Department of Environmental Health Sciences. "Having one of our alumni as the head of a state level office, who is also an advocate for environmental health issues, the health of our rural communities and health equity is phenomenal. I am extremely pleased at Chris' appointment."

Prior to being appointed director, Rustin served as deputy director of Environmental Health at GDPH for nearly five years while completing his doctoral studies at JPHCOPH. He brings a wealth of rural and urban public health experience to the position.

"I am very excited to accept this position and look forward to continuing the great work of my predecessor by collaborating across programs, focusing on quality improvement and ensuring our programs continue protecting the environmental health of the citizens and visitors of Georgia. The JPHCOPH doctoral program prepared me for the current challenges facing our public health system today and I am grateful for the dedication of the professors and guidance provided to me over my academic career," Rustin said.

In addition to holding a Doctorate of Public Health, Rustin is a registered environmental health specialist with the Georgia Board of Registered Environmental Health Professionals. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from Armstrong Atlantic State University and a master's in safety and environmental compliance from Georgia Southern University.